Amendments to the claims:

1. (currently amended) A communication system, comprising:

~~having~~ a control and/or drive network (11, 12) having network nodes (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) ~~of a control and/or drive network (11, 12)~~, wherein for operating industrial machines, ~~in particular printing machines~~[[,]]control and/or regulating signals are exchanged between the network nodes via a closed ringlike signal line (6, 7),

~~in which~~ wherein a first one of the network nodes ~~one network node (2)~~ exchanges signals with at least one further network node (1, 3) over a bidirectional signal path (10),

~~in which~~ wherein at least one of said network nodes ~~node (2)~~ has a switchover unit (8),

~~in which~~ wherein the switchover unit (8) is configured to ~~can be~~ communicate with two further network nodes (1, 3) via two bidirectional signal paths (10),

~~in which~~ wherein the switchover unit (8) in a first switching position connects the two signal paths (10) ~~in the manner of a~~ via bidirectional conduction of the signals through the network node (2),

~~in which~~ wherein the switching unit (8) in a second switching position interrupts the communication between the two signal paths and connects two signal courses (9) of at least one bidirectional signal path (10) to one another,

~~characterized in that~~

wherein the communication system is ~~can be~~ configured into different ~~various~~ networks (11, 12) via at least one predetermined ~~a suitable~~ connection of a ~~the~~ switchover unit ~~units~~ (8) of at least one of the network nodes (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) to a switchover unit (8) of at least one further of the network nodes (1, 2, 3, 4, 5), [[;]] and ~~that~~ wherein the networks (11, 12) have separate signal lines (6, 7) from one another.

2. (currently amended) The communication system as recited in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein two network nodes (3, 4) of two networks (11, 12) are each mechanically connected to one another via two lines (9) ~~which are embodied~~ between the two network nodes (3, 4).

3. (currently amended) The communication system as recited in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein a network node (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) is connected to a control unit (23).

4. (currently amended) The communication system as recited in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein each network (11, 12) has one control unit with a master function and at least one control unit with a slave function.

5. (currently amended) The communication system as recited in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the switchover unit (8) is switchable via a software controller.

6. (currently amended) The communication system as recited in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein one network (11, 12) is configured in accordance with a leading axis and the dependent following axes of a controller of a machine system[[;]] and wherein ~~that all the~~ control units which execute control tasks as a function of the leading axis and ~~all the~~ control units that execute control tasks as a function of following axes of the leading axis are combined into one network (11, 12).

7. (currently amended) The communication system as recited in claim 6, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the machine system is ~~represents~~ a printing machine (18) with a plurality of printing units (21).

8. (currently amended) The communication system as recited in claim 7, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein a control unit (1) is connected to a further ring line (14)[[;]], wherein ~~that~~ the further ring line (14) is connected to drive mechanisms (13) of a printing unit (21)[[;]], and ~~that~~ wherein a ~~the~~ control unit (1) controls the drive mechanisms (13) chronologically synchronously.

9. (currently amended) The communication system as recited in claim 7, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein control units (1, 2, 3) of a plurality of printing machines (18, 20) are connected to one network (11, 12) and are supplied by the network with control signals[[;]], wherein ~~that~~ a control unit performs a master function for ~~the~~ further control units, wherein said further control units which perform slave functions.

10. (currently amended) A method for controlling a communication system ~~as recited in claim 1~~, comprising the following steps:

providing a communication system, said communication system comprising a control and/or drive network (11, 12) having network nodes (1, 2, 3, 4, 5), wherein for operating industrial machines, control and/or regulating signals are exchanged between the network nodes via a closed ringlike signal line (6, 7), wherein a first one of the network nodes exchanges signals with at least one further network node (1, 3) over a bidirectional signal path (10), wherein at least one of said network nodes has a switchover unit (8), wherein the switchover unit (8) is configured to communicate with two further network nodes (1, 3) via two bidirectional signal paths (10), wherein the switchover unit (8) in a first switching position connects the two signal paths (10) via bidirectional conduction of the signals through the network node (2), wherein the switching unit (8) in a second switching position interrupts the communication between the two signal paths and connects two signal courses (9) of at least one bidirectional signal path (10) to one another, wherein the communication system is configured into different

networks (11, 12) via a suitable connection of the switchover units (8) of the network nodes (1, 2, 3, 4, 5),and wherein the networks (11, 12) have separate signal lines (6, 7) from one another, and

~~characterized in that~~

performing a change in the configuration of the networks (11, 12) ~~is performed~~ by means of software commands.

11. (currently amended) The method as recited in claim 10, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein if a malfunction occurs upon data exchange, a change in the configuration of the network is performed in order to exclude defective signal communication and/or a defective network node or a control unit from one network (11, 12).

12. (currently amended) The method as recited in claim 10, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the configuration of the network is performed as a function of a configuration of a plurality of machines of a processing group[[,]] in ~~particular~~ the form of a printing machine (18).

13. (currently amended) The method as recited in claim 12, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein if a malfunction occurs in a machine of the processing ~~production~~ group, the network node which supplies the defective machine with control signals is excluded from the network (11, 12).